

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 SAM-01

SSM-03 EUR-12 IO-13 OMB-01 TRSE-00 ACDA-07 /094 W

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R 011716Z NOV 76

FM AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2182

INFO USINT BAGHDAD

AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS

C O N F I D E N T I A L BEIRUT 8246

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, PINS, LE

SUBJECT: CONVERSATION WITH BRITISH CHARGE

1. IN RECENT CONVERSATION WITH EMBOFF, BRITISH CHARGE
D'AFFAIRES GEOFFREY HANCOCK, WHO HAS JUST VISITED
CHRISTIAN-CONTROLLED LEBANON, MADE FOLLOWING COMMENTS ON
CURRENT SITUATION:

A. CHRISTIAN MILITANTS ARE NOT OPTIMISTIC ON CHANCES
OF PRESENT CEASE-FIRE AND ARE IN FACT TALKING BELLIGERENTLY
AMONG THEMSELVES ABOUT WAYS IN WHICH TO CONTINUE THEIR
"DRIVE TOWARDS VICTORY." HANCOCK CONTACTS LAST WEEK
INCLUDED KATAEB PARTY MEMBERS KARIM PAKRADDOUNI AND BECHIR
GEMAYEL WHO OPENLY EXPRESSED A MILITANT, NON-COMPROMISING
LINE TOWARD PALESTINIAN/LEFTISTS.

B. HANCOCK SPENT NIGHT IN BAALBEK LAST WEEK
AND SAYS NIGHT-TIME CLASHES CONTINUE THERE BETWEEN
IRAQI BAATHISTS AND SYRIAN BAATHISTS.

C. HANCOCK SAID THE BRITISH ESTIMATE ON NUMBER
OF IRAQI TROOPS NOW IN LEBANON IS 4,500, MOST OF THESE
BEING IRAQI "POPULAR FORCES," THE IRAQI BAATH MILITIA
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FACTION OF THE REGULAR ARMY.

2. COMMENT: HANCOCK'S REPORT OF CLASHES BETWEEN
BAATHIST GROUPS IN BAALBEK ADDS WEIGHT TO PRESS
REPORTS OF CIVIL UNREST THERE AND POPULAR RESISTANCE
TO SYRIAN MILITARY OCCUPATION. OUR MOST RECENT ESTIMATE
OF NUMBER OF IRAQI TROOPS IN LEBANON IS 3,500.
LANE

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